THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) As per the reports received from the Indian Mission in USA, 590 Indian workers were recruited and deployed in the yards of M/s Signal International, a marine fabrication company, located at Mississippi and Texas. They had gone to US on H2B visas (Guest Workers Visa programme) valid initially for 10 months, extendable at the discretion of the employer and the US authorities. The workers were aggrieved on account of alleged poor accommodation and amenities, deductions from their salary for accommodation, food, electricity, water and also non-fulfilment of alleged initial commitment of permanent residency status.

(b) to (d) The Indian Mission in USA has approached the US Government to conduct a detailed investigation into the matter and take remedial measures. The Indian Mission has also taken steps to withhold visas from the main US recruiters involved to prevent them from entering India to resume their recruiting operations.

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has suspended the license of M/s Dewan Consultants and M/s. S. Mansur & Co., Mumbai, black listed the foreign employer and is also initiating legal action against the Recruiting Agent for violation of Emigration Act, 1983.

According to available information, there are no female workers among the Indian workers recruited by M/s. Signal International.

Money sent by Overseas Indians

3309. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether substantial amount of money had been sent by Overseas Indians and many crores of rupees had been received as emigration deposit from them;

(b) if so, the details including total amount of money sent by Overseas Indians for last five years, year-wise, State-wise, country-wise and category-wise;

(c) if so, the total amount of money received as emigration deposit and total amount of emigration deposits for last three years, year-wise, category-wise;

(d) if so, whether there is any proposal to utilize emigration deposit for welfare of Overseas Indians;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (f) The details of private remittances received through transfer during the last five years is as under:

Year	In US $ million	In Rs. Crore
2003-04	18885	86764
2004-05	14494	66861
2005-06	24102	106860
2006-07	27195	122635
2007-08*	27891	112407

*(up to Dec. 07)

Prior to the introduction of the Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) on 25.12.2003, emigrant workers recruited directly by the foreign employers were required to make a compulsory security deposit equivalent to one way return airfare while seeking emigration clearance. The purpose was to meet the cost of repatriation of the emigrant worker, if required. The emigrant workers could claim the security on his/her return to Indian. As per information available in this Ministry an amount of around Rs. 28 crore is held as security deposit in the Government account and the refund of deposits are being made as and when claims are filed, from time to time. these funds will continue to be held as security deposit and refunded to the relevant workers upon claims filed.

Independent of this, the Ministry has proposed creation of an Overseas Workers Welfare Fund for meeting various on site, off site and other welfare needs of the emigrants and the returnees.

Indian workers in Mississippi

3310. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of plight of hundreds of Indian workers recruited by Mumbai based company in Pascagoula, Mississippi;

(b) if so, whether Government has asked a detailed report from the Washington embassy;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government proposes to take any action against such recruitment agencies which are duping workers in foreign countries; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (c) As per the reports received from the Indian Mission in USA, 590 Indian workers were recruited and deployed in the yards of M/s Signal International, a marine fabrication company, located at Mississippi and Texas. They had gone to US on H2B visas (Guest Workers Visa Programme) valid initially for 10 months, extendable at the discretion of the employer and the US authorities. The workers were aggrieved on account of alleged poor accommodation and amenities, deductions from their salary for accommodation, food, electricity, water and also non-fulfilment of alleged intial commitment of permanent residency status.

The Indian Mission in USA has approached the US Government to conduct at detailed investigation on the complaints of Indian workers and take remedial measures. The Indian Mission has also taken steps to withhold visas from the main US recruiters involved to prevent them from entering India to conduct recruiting operations.

(d) and (e) The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has suspended the license of M/s Dewan Consultants, Mumbai and M/s S. Mansur & Co., Mumbai, black listed the foreign employer and is also intiating legal action against the Recruiting Agent for violation of Emigration Act, 1983.

Further, action is taken against the recruiting agents on receipt of complaints by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs under the provision of Emigration Act, 1983, leading to suspension and cancellation of their registration certificate/license in serious cases. In respect of unregistered recruiting agents, the complaints are referred to concerned State Governments/